



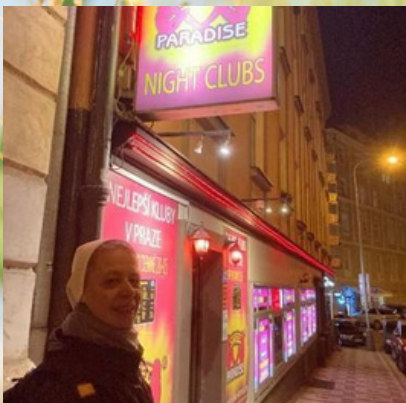
RELIGIOUS IN EUROPE NETWORKING
AGAINST TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

APRIL - JUNE 2026



READ UPDATES FROM OUR MEMBERS IN UKRAINE, UK, AND POLAND ON ISSUES OF AWARENESS RAISING, ADVOCACY, AND CARING FOR THE CARERS: PAGE 4, PAGE 3 AND PAGE 15



SR. KLÁRA MARIE STRÁNÍKOVÁ DOES OUTREACH ON CITY STREETS, RENATE CORE GROUP MEET IN WARSAW FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING, AND AWARENESS RAISING INITIATIVES CONTINUE IN SCHOOLS: PAGE 20, PAGE 22, PAGE 13

ACT TO PREVENT TRAFFICKING IRELAND (APT) PARTICIPATE IN JOINT SUBMISSION TO THE IRISH UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW PROCESS:

This joint civil society submission to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review assesses Ireland's progress on human rights, with a particular focus on human trafficking and access to education. It acknowledges positive steps, such as the development of the Third National Action Plan on Human Trafficking, but highlights persistent shortcomings in implementation, coordination, and accountability. The report identifies major gaps in victim identification, especially for children, limited prosecutions, inadequate supports and accommodation, and rising concerns around labour exploitation. It calls for stronger legal frameworks, better data systems, expanded training for frontline professionals, and more effective enforcement measures, alongside a victim-centered approach that ensures access to justice and services.

The submission also examines structural exclusion within Ireland's education system, noting that a cohort of young people is effectively denied meaningful access to post-primary education due to poverty, trauma, and inflexible school models. It argues that alternative education provision is fragmented, under-recognised, and underfunded, and fails to meet the needs of vulnerable learners. The authors recommend establishing a statutory framework for alternative education, ensuring sustainable funding, improving cross-sector coordination, and embedding the voices of young people in decision-making. Overall, the submission calls for systemic, rights-based reforms to better protect vulnerable groups and ensure Ireland meets its international human rights obligations.

READ THE FULL REPORT HERE: [1. To Share – UPR of Ireland APT Ireland Submission. April 2nd 2026](#)

SR. IMELDA POOLE (CJ) AND DR. MARY MCHUGH VISIT LORETO, ST ALBANS, UK:



As part of CJ/Loreto's commitment to this year's theme of Internationality, Loreto St. Albans welcomed Sr. Imelda Poole CJ and Dr. Mary McHugh into school on Tuesday 5th May 2026. Sr Imelda addressed more than 700 students throughout the day, sharing her mission from the past 20 years to bring about systemic change for the world's most vulnerable.

Since 2005, Sr Imelda has worked tirelessly in Albania responding to the growing crisis of human trafficking. In 2012, she co-founded the Mary Ward Loreto Foundation, a pioneering NGO dedicated to tackling modern slavery through prevention, advocacy and survivor reintegration.

Dr Mary McHugh is the Chair of Trustees for the UK branch of this charity. Sr Imelda's talk was deeply inspiring, reminding us that each of us can play a part. Like the intertwined roots of trees in a forest, our individual actions can support collective efforts to uphold hope and dignity for all. Year 12 student delegates, were now more motivated than ever to support Sr Imelda's vital work when they travel to Albania this summer.

To learn more and support this important cause, please visit the Mary Ward Loreto Foundation: www.marywardloreto.org

DIGITAL LIFE IS FRAGILE (CYBER LIFE IS FRAGILE) – AI AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN HUMAN TRAFFICKING, CARITAS UKRAINE:

Human trafficking methods are becoming increasingly complex and sophisticated, while digital technologies make it easier for perpetrators to operate. To identify emerging risks and better protect those in vulnerable situations, Caritas Ukraine's anti-trafficking teams strengthen their skills and knowledge.

Last month, three specialists from Caritas Ukraine took part in the international training "Addressing technology-facilitated trafficking in human beings in the context of Ukraine", organised by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Together with representatives of civil society organisations from across Europe, participants discussed current challenges and exchanged practical experience in countering human trafficking especially in cyber space. Particular attention was given to real case analysis, including cases involving the use of digital technologies.

A special session was focused on factors that increase vulnerability to exploitation on the Internet: domestic violence, poverty, war and forced displacement, family separation, bullying, and sexual violence. In combination with the digital environment, these factors create additional risks.

Participants also explored emerging threats related to the use of artificial intelligence for recruitment, manipulation, and data collection on potential victims, making detection and response more complex. Special emphasis was made on a survivor-centred approach, ensuring respect for the dignity, needs, and safety of each individual. The knowledge gained strengthen capacity of Caritas Ukraine to respond effectively to current challenges and to provide proper support to people affected by trafficking.

RENATE VOICES FEATURED ON THE GLOBAL STAGE: GLOBAL SISTER REPORT FEATURE RENATE INPUT AT CSW70:



CSW70
ONLINE WEBINAR
11 March 2026 | 17:30 UK / 18:30 CET

10 circular portraits of speakers are arranged in two rows of five.

CLICK TO REGISTER VIA ZOOM

INTRODUCTION AND OPENING PRAYER BY RENATE CO PRESIDENTS:
Sr. Marie Power HFB (UK and Ireland), and Ms. Ivonne van de Kar (Netherlands)

**THE USE OF DIGITAL MEDIA FOR ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS RAISING IN THE
CONTEXT OF WAR;** Ms. Iryna Maievska, Caritas (Ukraine)

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING AS AN ISSUE FOR THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE & EU
INSTITUTIONS;**
Ms. Marie Christine Davy (France) & Dr. Mary McHugh (UK)

**A SPOTLIGHT ON JUSTICE AND COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN
TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION:** Mr. Brian O' Toole (Ireland)

At CSW70, contributions from RENATE and its members were highlighted in Global Sisters Report, raising awareness of gender-based violence and human trafficking worldwide.

Read more [here](#).

REACHING THE UNSEEN: VATRA'S WORK ON THE GROUND, ALBANIA:

During the month of March, Vatra's five Mobile Units operated across the 5 regions of Albania: Vlora, Berat, Durres, Fier, and Dibra, working persistently to identify and support people at risk and potential victims of trafficking. During this period, the Mobile Units directly reached and worked with 283 individuals at risk, each with their own story, challenges, and need for support.



The people they meet are diverse, yet connected by common threads of vulnerability. A teenage girl who has dropped out of school and spends her days isolated at home. A young boy working informally to support his family. Migrants and asylum seekers trying to rebuild their lives in unfamiliar environments.

By entering communities (schools, public spaces, rural and urban areas marked by socio-economic hardship), the teams create opportunities for trust. Conversations start informally, often with simple questions, but can gradually open the door to deeper realities. In classrooms, community spaces, and institutional settings, Vatra organizes information sessions that aim not only to inform, but to empower – helping individuals recognize signs of exploitation and understand where to seek help.

At the same time, strong collaboration with local actors is essential. Police officers, social workers, teachers, healthcare professionals, and civil society organizations all play a role in recognizing and responding to trafficking risks. Through regular coordination meetings and on-the-ground support,

Vatra helps strengthen the implementation of protection mechanisms and ensures that no case is left unaddressed. When a potential victim is identified, the work takes another critical step: referral and mediation. Ensuring access to protection and support services can be a complex process, requiring coordination across institutions and sustained follow-up. For each individual supported, this process represents a pathway out of risk and toward safety.

Human trafficking continues to represent a serious challenge in Albania, affecting both nationals and foreign citizens, with a particular impact on women, girls, and children. Trafficked persons experience a range of human rights violations, from restriction of movement and withholding of wages, to coercion and threats, and even severe physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

In this context, the work of “Vatra” Center becomes even more essential, aiming not only at responding after trafficking occurs, but also at prevention, empowerment, and raising awareness in the field, where the risk is real and silent.

SOLWODI GERMANY ATTEND PARIS CONFERENCE MARKING 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF FRENCH ABOLITIONIST LAW

In mid-April, SOLWODI attended an international conference in Paris marking the 10th anniversary of France's abolitionist law. Together with partner organizations from around the world, we exchanged ideas on effective strategies to combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

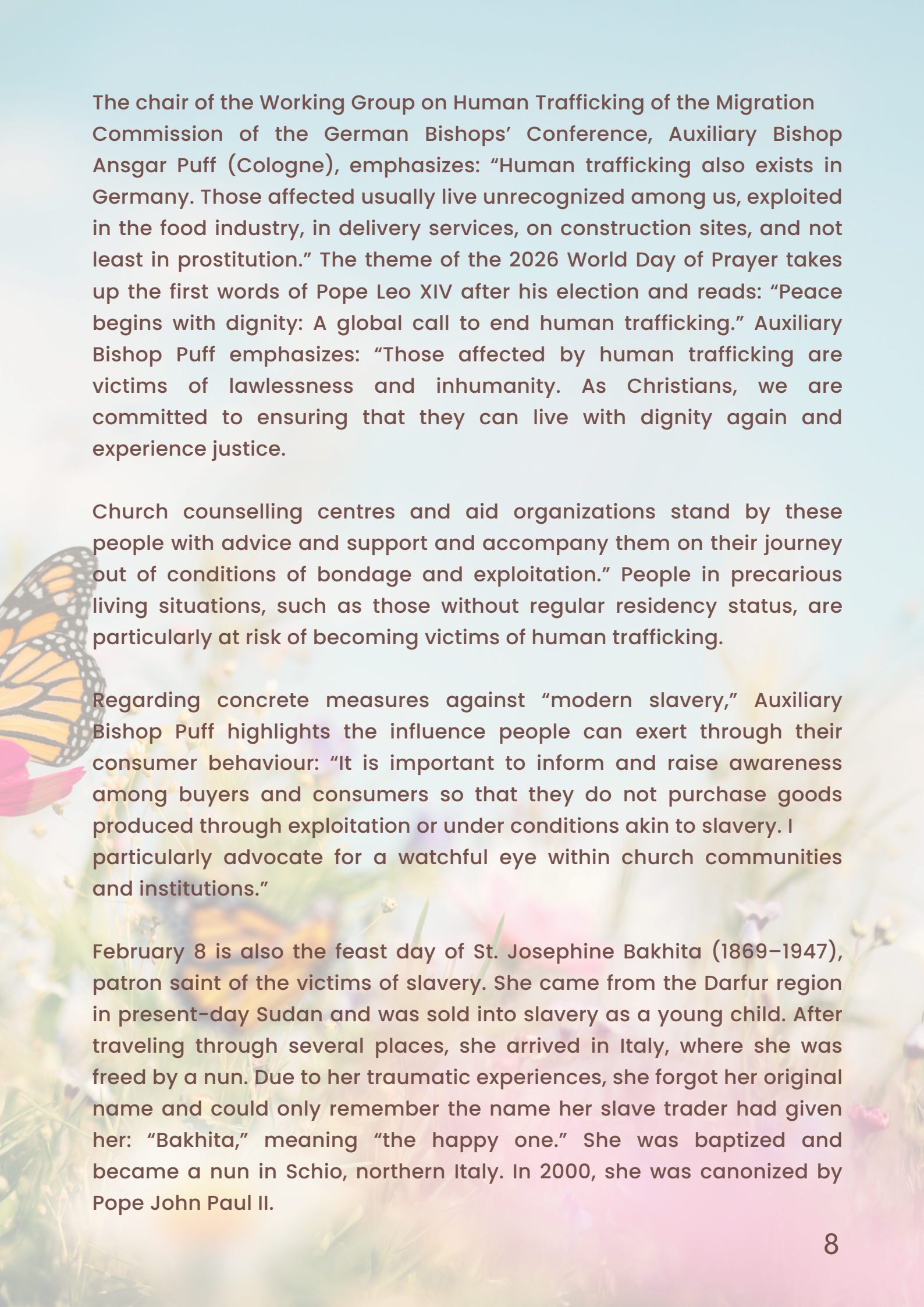


Particularly impressive was the demonstration led by survivors, with over 600 participants, which sent a strong message in favor of a ban on the purchase of sex. The discussions once again demonstrated how important a clear legal framework is for protecting victims and combating exploitation in the long term.

We are also continuing to expand our support services in Germany: The opening of a new shelter for underage girls (ages 16–18) is planned for September 2026. In Upper Franconia, we are currently establishing a new SOLWODI specialized counseling center. You can find more information about our work and projects on our website <https://www.solwodi.de> or in our newsletters.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING, “VICTIMS OF LAWLESSNESS AND INHUMANITY”, NEWS FROM THE GERMAN BISHOPS’ CONFERENCE:

In 2015, Pope Francis designated February 8 as the World Day of Prayer and Reflection Against Human Trafficking. On this day, Christians around the world draw attention to the consequences of “modern slavery” and unite in prayer with those affected.



The chair of the Working Group on Human Trafficking of the Migration Commission of the German Bishops' Conference, Auxiliary Bishop Ansgar Puff (Cologne), emphasizes: "Human trafficking also exists in Germany. Those affected usually live unrecognized among us, exploited in the food industry, in delivery services, on construction sites, and not least in prostitution." The theme of the 2026 World Day of Prayer takes up the first words of Pope Leo XIV after his election and reads: "Peace begins with dignity: A global call to end human trafficking." Auxiliary Bishop Puff emphasizes: "Those affected by human trafficking are victims of lawlessness and inhumanity. As Christians, we are committed to ensuring that they can live with dignity again and experience justice.

Church counselling centres and aid organizations stand by these people with advice and support and accompany them on their journey out of conditions of bondage and exploitation." People in precarious living situations, such as those without regular residency status, are particularly at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.

Regarding concrete measures against "modern slavery," Auxiliary Bishop Puff highlights the influence people can exert through their consumer behaviour: "It is important to inform and raise awareness among buyers and consumers so that they do not purchase goods produced through exploitation or under conditions akin to slavery. I particularly advocate for a watchful eye within church communities and institutions."

February 8 is also the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita (1869–1947), patron saint of the victims of slavery. She came from the Darfur region in present-day Sudan and was sold into slavery as a young child. After traveling through several places, she arrived in Italy, where she was freed by a nun. Due to her traumatic experiences, she forgot her original name and could only remember the name her slave trader had given her: "Bakhita," meaning "the happy one." She was baptized and became a nun in Schio, northern Italy. In 2000, she was canonized by Pope John Paul II.

“Modern slavery” or “human trafficking” refers to various forms of subjugation and exploitation. According to the Global Slavery Index 2025, approximately 50 million people worldwide live in exploitative conditions, including twelve million minors. It is estimated that approximately 47,000 people in Germany are affected by modern slavery.

In 2014, at the suggestion of the Migration Commission of the German Bishops’ Conference, Catholic organizations working to combat human trafficking in Germany joined forces to form the “Working Group on Human Trafficking,” which has been chaired by Auxiliary Bishop Ansgar Puff since 2018.

In addition to the Secretariat of the German Bishops’ Conference and the Catholic Office in Berlin, the group includes the German Caritas Association, the German Commission for Justice and Peace, Missio Aachen, the Maltese Order, Renovabis, Solwodi, IN VIA, and the Women’s Information Center in Stuttgart.

**RENATE CO-PRESIDENT, SR. MARIE POWER (HFB)
APPOINTED EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE ON TALITHA
KUM 2026-2029.**

RENATE is pleased to announce the appointment of Sr. Marie Power, HFB, Co-President of RENATE, as European Representative for the 2026–2029 term. In this role, she will also serve as a member of the Talitha Kum International Coordination Committee (TKICC).



RENATE would also like to express its sincere appreciation to Sr. Adina Balan, CJ, for her dedicated service as Regional Representative for Europe. Through her committed leadership, generous collaboration and faithful contribution to the mission of RENATE and Talitha Kum, she has played a significant role in strengthening the network and advancing collective efforts across Europe.

EASTER AND SUMMER NEWS FROM DAR HOSEA, MALTA:

In April we started preparing for Easter where our service users were invited to a morning in which we held the decoration of our Easter sweet which is called Figolla . It was a morning full of laughter and sharing of ideas of how to go about the decoration of the sweets. The Egg Hunt was a success with the kids who loved running around the house searching for the eggs.

At Dar Hosea, we believe that our work is more than just a service – it is an act of profound love. One of the most vital, yet quiet pillars of our mission is our Intercession and Prayer Team. In May we started a 4 session formation series entitled: Another Path of Love for our staff and volunteers. How can prayer translate into tangible dignity, support and love for the women in our care?

These sessions are being well received. We also hold a monthly Adoration and Intercession in front of the Holy Eucharist. Now we have started with our summer programme that we have in store for our dear service users and their children. In the first week of June we organised a boat trip and a visit to one of the oldest towns in Malta, followed by a light lunch. The service users enjoyed the trip and the information given about the town we visited, because the volunteer who took them round is a professional local tourist guide.



CARE FOR CAREGIVERS; CARITAS UKRAINE IS TAKING STEPS TO PREVENT BURNOUT AMONG ITS STAFF:

Those who help others to overcome the crisis daily also need time to pause, recharge, and feel supported by those around them. That is why staff of the program Safe migration and counter trafficking from national office Caritas Ukraine and seven local organizations came together for a joint working meeting and supervision. The employees discussed what troubles them and what inspires them: they shared successes, discussed complex cases, analyzed challenges, and sought solutions for future work with vulnerable people affected by war in Ukraine.

Special attention was given to supporting the mental health of specialists, as working in the context of war in Ukraine is an enormous burden. During a supervision session with the supervisor-psychologist, participants learned self-regulation techniques,



practiced stress-reduction exercises, and identified personal sources of resilience to protect themselves from professional burnout. Working together, informal communication, and the opportunity to spend time in beautiful mountainous and calm location helped colleagues from various regions of the country and helped Caritas caregivers to strengthen their resilience, trust and team spirit.

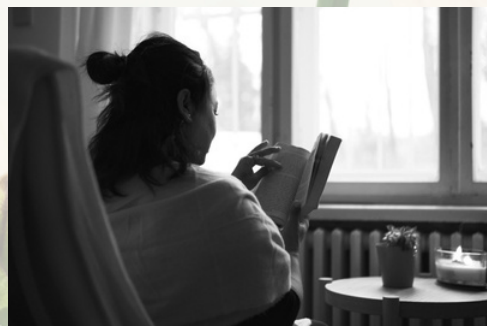
This meeting served as a reminder that to support others, it is important to find time and resources for oneself, maintain inner resilience, and be a source of support for one another.

FROM EXPLOITATION TO SAFETY: REKHA'S STORY, CARITAS SLOVAKIA:

Rekha* came to Slovakia from Bangladesh in search of a better life and the opportunity to support her family. Like many migrant workers, she hoped to find stable employment and build a safer future for herself and her loved ones.

She began working in a restaurant, often for long hours under difficult conditions. However, despite her hard work, she received no wages. Her employer repeatedly claimed that she needed to repay a debt that did not, in fact, exist. At the same time, Rekha was living in overcrowded and inadequate accommodation, without privacy, safety, or stability. Eventually, Rekha found the courage to seek help and contacted the police herself.

Today, Rekha is living in a safe environment. She has stable employment, receives fair pay for her work, and has regained regular contact with her family. Once again, she is able to support her loved ones and begin rebuilding her life with dignity and hope.



Stories like Rekha's remind us of the realities of labour exploitation and the importance of accessible support, protection, and accompaniment for those affected by human trafficking and abuse.

***Name changed to protect identity.**

Photo: Anonymised photograph related to the story.

Photographer: Maroš Ryba.

ACTIVITIES TO PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING: EDUCATION, AWARENESS, AND PRAYER, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:

As a community attentive to the needs of our time and committed to responding wherever possible, ongoing efforts continue in the area of prevention and awareness-raising against human trafficking.

On 29 January 2026, Sr. Victoria Šimić, Sister of Mercy of the Holy Cross from Đakovo, delivered a lecture on human trafficking in the Parish of St. John the Beheader in Odžak, Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with the Parish Pastoral Centre. Reflecting on the event, the Parish's Facebook page noted that Sr. Victoria spoke "with moving words about the victims of human trafficking."

The programme was moderated by Parish Priest Fr. Ilija Orkić and Ms. Amanda Đ., Head of the Regional Office of the Archdiocesan Centre for Youth Pastoral John Paul II for Bosanska Posavina. The lecture formed part of the social project Caring for Socially Vulnerable Persons in the Parish of Odžak and the Odžak Region, supported by the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy of the Republic of Croatia.



Alongside public lectures, Sr. Victoria has continued leading prevention workshops in schools, helping young people to recognise the dangers and realities of trafficking and exploitation. On 17 April 2026, two workshops were held at the Secondary Vocational School for approximately one hundred second- and third-year students.

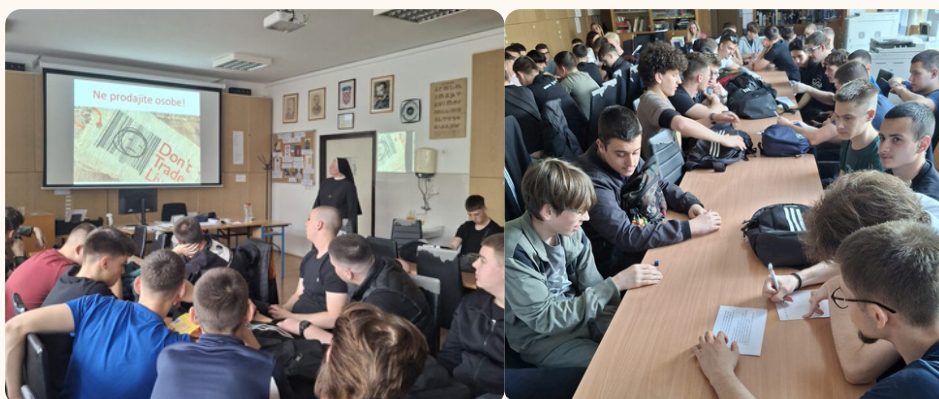
According to the school's website: "The students learned about the methods used by those who buy and sell children, young people and adults, and how each of us can protect ourselves. Students became aware of the situations in which victims of human trafficking find themselves, how they feel at that time, and who they can turn to for help."

A further workshop took place on 23 April 2026 at the elementary school in Stari Jankovci for eighth-grade students. During the session, students were reminded that human trafficking is one of the gravest violations of human rights, and they explored ways to recognise exploitation, protect themselves, and support others who may be at risk.

Continuing this important educational outreach, another workshop is scheduled to take place on 7 May 2026 at the "Mitnica" Elementary School in Vukovar, at the invitation of Sr. Petra Toman, SCSC, with more than thirty eighth-grade students expected to participate.

All of these activities are accompanied by the prayerful support of elderly and sick Sisters in the convents in Zagreb and Đakovo and entrusted to the intercession of St. Josephine Bakhita, patron saint of victims of human trafficking.

As of Monday 1 June 2026 Sister Victoria also visited one more school in Vinkovci and had two workshops for the 8th graders (age 14 to 15), 40 of them. This means the number of students who have taken part in these workshops up to now has passed one thousand! (1030 students).



RENATE CELEBRATES SR. GABRIELA HASIURA'S CONTINUED ADVOCACY AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON POLISH TELEVISION:

RENATE is delighted to share a recent television interview featuring our Polish representative, Sr. Gabriela Hasiura, who appeared on national Polish television to speak about the ongoing reality of human trafficking and the importance of prevention, awareness, and support for those affected by exploitation.

The interview was broadcast on the programme Dobrego Dnia and can be viewed via the link below. Sr. Gabriela's contribution begins at approximately 52 minutes and 50 seconds into the programme.



For many years, Sr. Gabriela has been a committed and respected voice in the fight against human trafficking in Poland. Through her tireless advocacy, education, and direct engagement with those vulnerable to exploitation, she has helped shine a light on an issue that often remains hidden from public view. Her appearance on national television is a testament to her expertise, dedication, and unwavering commitment to safeguarding human dignity.

We warmly congratulate Sr. Gabriela on this opportunity to bring these important issues to a wider audience and thank her for her continued leadership, witness, and commitment in the ongoing fight against human trafficking.

Watch the programme [here](#).

Please note: The interview is in Polish

SOLWODI HUNGARY: STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION, PREVENTION, AND SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING:

Over the past number of months, SOLWODI Hungary has continued its important work in the areas of prevention, collaboration, awareness-raising, and support for victims of human trafficking.

In February, SOLWODI Hungary hosted the min-NGO forum together with fellow faith-based anti-trafficking organisations. The forum gathers three times each year, providing a valuable opportunity for organisations to share experiences, exchange ideas, and discuss good practices in the fight against human trafficking and exploitation. The next gathering is planned for early May 2026.

On 6 February, SOLWODI Hungary also organised a Holy Mass for victims of human trafficking in partnership with the Franciscans in Pest, marking the beginning of a new collaboration. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Gábor Mohos, who reflected in his homily on the importance of recognising and protecting the dignity of every human person.

In March, members of SOLWODI Hungary participated online in a prevention-focused event for teachers and classroom assistants working in a remote village area of Hungary. The session explored the realities of human trafficking through survivor testimonies, helping participants to better understand the push and pull factors that can lead to exploitation, as well as the different forms trafficking can take. The conversation with teachers was described as deeply meaningful, with several participants expressing interest in continuing the dialogue following the event.

SOLWODI Hungary also became a member of AtlasFree in March, expanding its network of partners across Europe and around the world and strengthening opportunities for cooperation and shared learning.

In mid-April, SOLWODI Hungary held its Annual General Meeting, where board members reflected on and presented the organisation's activities and achievements over the past year.

Looking ahead, SOLWODI Hungary has been invited to speak at an anti-trafficking conference organised by the Hungarian Interior Ministry in May. The organisation will share examples of its prevention work with young people and within schools, highlighting best practices and lessons learned through its ongoing outreach and education efforts.

Alongside these activities, SOLWODI Hungary continues to respond directly to individuals affected by trafficking and exploitation. Over recent months, the organisation has received numerous calls for help from victims both within Hungary and abroad, particularly from Germany. Through longstanding and trusted cooperation with sister SOLWODI organisations in Germany, the team regularly supports victims in the process of repatriation and accessing assistance. This cooperation was once again evident in April, when SOLWODI Hungary assisted in the repatriation of a victim in need of support and safety.

Through collaboration, prevention, advocacy, and accompaniment, SOLWODI Hungary continues to play an important role in responding to trafficking and supporting human dignity across borders.

SOLWODI UPDATE NO. 218 – KIRCHENTAG, GERMANY:

“Have courage, stand up” was the motto of the 104th German Catholic Convention, held May 13–17 in Würzburg. SOLWODI Germany was also represented with a booth on the “Church Mile.” There, we had the opportunity to engage in many conversations with very interested visitors and were able to distribute a wide variety of informational materials.



The topic of “Combating Violence Against Women” has struck a chord with many people in the current climate. Additionally, many were surprised to learn that forms of violence such as human trafficking or forced marriage also occur in large numbers in Germany. “I heard about an African woman in China who was forced to work in a studio without a passport and against her will, but the fact that something like this also happens in my own country really shocks me,” one visitor summed it up.

The Catholic Convention in Würzburg was also an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the new specialized counseling center in Würzburg, which, together with the center in Gemünden am Main, is continuing the work of the former Bad Kissingen location in Lower Franconia. Thankfully, SOLWODI colleagues from Lower Franconia supported our booth at the Catholic Convention every day. In the process, they were able to meet new network partners and establish valuable contacts. We have already received an initial request for a presentation to introduce the work in Würzburg.

“Have courage, stand up” is also a motto that reflects SOLWODI’s work very well. After all, our goal is to empower women affected by violence to live independent and self-determined lives. We want to encourage them and help them develop the skills and abilities they need to achieve their life goals.

SOLWODI’s founder, Sr. Lea Ackermann, would have called this empowerment. That, too, was a wonderful experience: many people approached us at the booth because they had known Sr. Lea or had once attended one of her lectures. We were grateful to realize the impact Sr. Lea has had on the lives of so many people.

Many people, especially young people, were able to engage with our topics in a playful way by trying out the SOLWODI puzzle, which featured key terms from our work. This provided plenty of opportunities to strike up conversations.

FROM IDENTIFICATION TO REINTEGRATION: STRENGTHENING PROTECTION FOR SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ALBANIA:

Vatra Psycho-Social Centre continues to play a key role in Albania's anti-trafficking response by providing comprehensive support to survivors of human trafficking and strengthening local mechanisms for identification, protection, and reintegration.

A central component of Vatra's work is the operation of Mobile Units that conduct outreach in vulnerable communities and work closely with local institutions, including social services, police, schools, and healthcare providers. Through proactive fieldwork and coordinated action, the teams identify individuals at risk and ensure that victims of trafficking are referred to specialized protection and support services.

The increasing cooperation between public institutions and specialized anti-trafficking services highlights the growing recognition of the importance of early identification and victim-centred interventions. Effective collaboration remains essential in reaching vulnerable populations, preventing further exploitation, and ensuring timely access to assistance.



Beyond identification, Vatra provides long-term reintegration support tailored to the individual needs of survivors and their children. The organisation's multidisciplinary approach includes safe accommodation, psychosocial counselling, healthcare, educational support, vocational guidance, legal assistance, and support for independent living. These services are designed to help survivors recover from trauma, rebuild their confidence, strengthen their social and economic independence, and reduce the risk of re-trafficking.

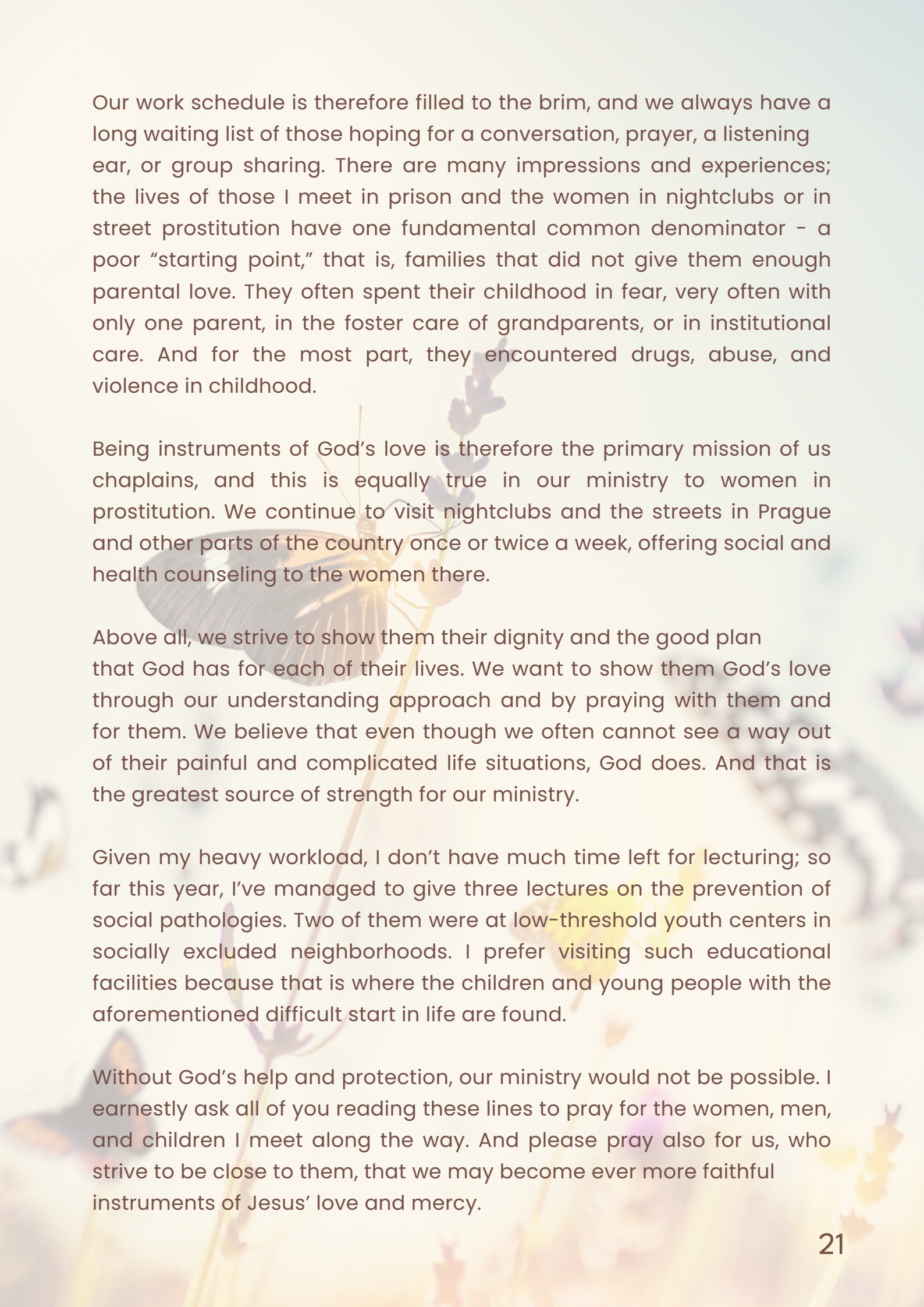
Access to justice remains another important area of intervention. Survivors receive legal counselling and representation throughout judicial and administrative procedures, helping them navigate complex systems and exercise their rights. Particular attention is given to promoting a rights-based approach that recognises victims as individuals in need of protection and support, rather than treating them as offenders for acts committed as a consequence of their exploitation.

The experiences of survivors continue to demonstrate that recovery is a long-term process requiring coordinated and sustained support. Reintegration extends far beyond immediate protection and includes access to education, employment opportunities, healthcare, stable housing, and social inclusion.

The photo on the previous page: *“Women of the World Wall”* – showcases a collective creative activity developed by survivors and supported by Vatra, celebrating resilience, hope, and the strength of women rebuilding their lives after exploitation and violence.

“I WAS ON THE STREETS AND IN PRISON, AND YOU CAME TO SEE ME” - ARTICLE BY SR. KLÁRA MARIE STRÁNÍKOVÁ, SCSC, CZECH REPUBLIC

“Our sister Klára, when she’s not in a brothel, is in jail.” That’s how my friends tease me, and in a way, they’re right. It’s been three years since the Lord called me to yet another field of service for people whose dignity is being violated. In addition to providing social and pastoral care for women in prostitution, I now also serve as a chaplain at the largest prison facility in the Czech Republic: Prague – Pankrác. Together with two other colleagues – a Catholic priest and a one woman as a Protestant minister – we regularly minister to more than a hundred accused and convicted women and men (out of a total of about 1,200 inmates in our prison); we are also responsible for the prison hospital and are available to the prison staff.



Our work schedule is therefore filled to the brim, and we always have a long waiting list of those hoping for a conversation, prayer, a listening ear, or group sharing. There are many impressions and experiences; the lives of those I meet in prison and the women in nightclubs or in street prostitution have one fundamental common denominator - a poor "starting point," that is, families that did not give them enough parental love. They often spent their childhood in fear, very often with only one parent, in the foster care of grandparents, or in institutional care. And for the most part, they encountered drugs, abuse, and violence in childhood.

Being instruments of God's love is therefore the primary mission of us chaplains, and this is equally true in our ministry to women in prostitution. We continue to visit nightclubs and the streets in Prague and other parts of the country once or twice a week, offering social and health counseling to the women there.

Above all, we strive to show them their dignity and the good plan that God has for each of their lives. We want to show them God's love through our understanding approach and by praying with them and for them. We believe that even though we often cannot see a way out of their painful and complicated life situations, God does. And that is the greatest source of strength for our ministry.

Given my heavy workload, I don't have much time left for lecturing; so far this year, I've managed to give three lectures on the prevention of social pathologies. Two of them were at low-threshold youth centers in socially excluded neighborhoods. I prefer visiting such educational facilities because that is where the children and young people with the aforementioned difficult start in life are found.

Without God's help and protection, our ministry would not be possible. I earnestly ask all of you reading these lines to pray for the women, men, and children I meet along the way. And please pray also for us, who strive to be close to them, that we may become ever more faithful instruments of Jesus' love and mercy.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: RENATE CORE GROUP SETS STRATEGIC DIRECTION IN WARSAW, REPORT BY BRIAN O'TOOLE (IRELAND), NEWLY APPOINTED RENATE CORE GROUP MEMBER:

Towards the end of May, the newly elected Core Group gathered in Warsaw for its first in-person meeting, marking an important opportunity to build relationships and plan for the years ahead.

The meeting covered a wide range of strategic and operational matters, including the preparation of a funding application to support RENATE's work over the next three years. Discussions also focused on the possibility of convening a Assembly in November 2027.

A significant part of the meeting was devoted to capacity building and identifying emerging issues that require greater attention. These included exploring the implications of platforms such as OnlyFans, the growing impact of artificial intelligence, and the intersection between technology and human trafficking. The group also considered how the themes emerging from recent Church teaching (Magnifica Humanitas), including reflections on human dignity and technological development, might inform future training and advocacy initiatives.



The Core Group reviewed plans for forthcoming research and received updates from RENATE's various task groups, including those focused on legal issues, prayer and spirituality, awareness-raising, advocacy, and shelter provision for survivors of trafficking and exploitation.

These groups continue to play a vital role in advancing RENATE's mission of prevention, protection, advocacy, and support for those affected by human trafficking.

The Warsaw meeting was both productive and encouraging, providing a strong foundation for the work ahead. While there will be a further opportunity for the Core Group to meet in person in September in conjunction with a retreat, the majority of meetings and decision-making processes will continue to take place online, enabling participation from members across Europe while maintaining momentum in the network's ongoing work against trafficking and exploitation.

EXPLORING EMERGING DIGITAL THREATS: RENATE TRAINING SERIES ON AI, ONLINE PLATFORMS AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

On 28 May, Ms. Valentina López-Yanes, Assistant Project Officer at the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, led an insightful session on the role of technology and generative AI in changing trafficking in human beings. Participants explored emerging risks, including deep fakes, synthetic identities, the misuse of AI by traffickers, and strategies for awareness-raising, prevention, advocacy, and policy engagement.

The second training, held on 2 June, featured Ms. Natalia Colmenar Calvo, Coordinator of Awareness and Training, Women's Area and Fight against Trafficking, Diaconia, Spain, who provided an in-depth examination of OnlyFans and the wider ecosystem that has developed around the platform. The session explored the roles of agencies, recruiters, influencers, social media algorithms, and financial systems, with particular attention given to the impact on children and young people, issues of exploitation, trafficking, and human dignity.

Both sessions generated excellent engagement and discussion among participants, highlighting the importance of equipping anti-trafficking practitioners with the knowledge and tools needed to respond to rapidly evolving digital challenges.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND NEWSLETTERS

- **MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS: FROM THE HOLY FATHER LEO XIV ON THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE HUMAN PERSON IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**
- **SOLWODI NEWSLETTER NO. 148, MAY 2026**

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